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Correspondence.

A TRICK OF PICTURE-CLEANERS.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: What is the process of cleaning oil paintings employed by dealers which produces such an admirable result? I refer to examples you see in some picture store windows of half restored paintings, which, judging from the portion which has not been restored, would seem to be hopelessly faded. It is really wonderful that restorations can be carried to such a degree of perfection.

HOLLAR, New York.

ANSWER.—We are grieved to have to reveal the fact to our guileless correspondent that there is a trick in the preparation of most of the half restored paintings which are exposed in the store windows simply to catch the unwary. The mode of procedure is to get a picture in rather good condition and lay a straight edge up the centre, then take a brush, called a sash tool, with a little raw umber or some dirty color, *soil* half the picture and then soften with a badger brush to make the discoloring look uniform. Methylated spirits and also hartshorn are used for cleaning oil paintings; but they must be used by practised hands. A novice should not attempt such delicate work.

SOME QUESTIONS OF COLOR.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: With a buff wall for a drawing-room, what colors would you recommend for a dado and woodwork; and with olive colored walls for a dining-room, how would you color the dado and ceiling, and what wood would look best for furniture?

SILVER BELL, Madison Avenue.

ANSWER.—Chocolate or olive brown would make an effective dado for the buff wall, and the woodwork might be dark blue, toned down with black. For the dining-room you might have a deep crimson dado and the ceiling kalsomined a rich cream color. Light oak furniture, upholstered in bronze green leather, would harmonize with this coloring.

ORIGIN OF THE TERM "DIAPER."

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: Can you tell me the origin of the word diaper, as used in its decorative sense?

S. A. A., New York.

ANSWER.—It comes from the French word "diapre," derived from the name of the Flemish town D'Ypres, early famous for the patterns of its textile fabrics. The word "diaper," as applied to linen, has the same origin.

"ANTIQUE" AND "MEDIÆVAL."

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: Will you kindly settle a discussion as to the limitations of the terms "antique" and "mediæval"? What are the exact periods covered by each?

B. D. M., Joliet, Ill.

ANSWER.—In regard to the term "antique," no absolute limitation can be assigned. It is properly applied to monuments and remains of the arts of the ancient Greeks and Romans and their contemporaries. It is also used, incorrectly we think, in the general sense of "old" as regards the present age. "Mediæval" is a term easier to define. It covers the period from the overthrow of the Roman Empire consummated by the sacking of Rome by the Goths, to the overthrow of the Greek Empire by the sacking of Constantinople by Mohammed II., in 1453.

BACKGROUND FOR MONOCHROME PLAQUE.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: What coloring would be good for a monochrome painting of the human figure on an oval plaque for a sconce.

A. P., Boston.

ANSWER.—On a ground of very light carmine No. 1, use light gray, and retouch with brown gray.

"AMORINI."

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: In descriptions of ceramic decoration, I often come across the word "Amorini." What does it mean?

S. A. A., Cincinnati.

ANSWER.—It is Italian, and means "Cupids."

EMBROIDERY MATERIALS.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: Will your Art Needlework editor please answer the following questions through correspondence columns: (1) How to avoid puckering or pulling in crewel work? (2) What is "tapestry wool," spoken of in a recent number of your magazine? (3) What kind of material is "crash"?

MINERVA, Orange, N. J.

ANSWER.—(1) In the first place see that your needle is not so small as to require any force in drawing it through the material; secondly, the material must be held in a convex position over the fingers, so that the crewel in the needle shall be looser than the ground; and thirdly, do not use too long needlefuls. (2) Tapestry wool is more than twice the thickness of crewel, and is used for screen panels, or large curtain borders, where the work is coarse and a good deal of ground has to be covered. It is also used for bath blankets and carriage and sofa rugs. (3)

Properly speaking, the name *crash* is only applied to the coarse Russian homespun linen, which has been a favorite with English needleworkers from the beauty of its tone of color. It is, however, erroneously applied to all linens used for embroidery, whether woven by hand-loom or machinery, and this confusion of names frequently leads to mistakes. Crash is almost always very coarse, is never more than eighteen inches wide, and cannot be mistaken for a machine-made fabric. It is woven by the Russian peasants in their own homes, in lengths varying from five to ten yards, and it is very difficult to find two pieces among a hundred that in any way match each other.

TO KEEP CHINESE WHITE MOIST.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: Is there any way to keep Chinese white moist? Mine gets dry in the bottle almost as soon as it is opened, and I cannot dissolve it again. The same remarks apply to some of my water colors.

ARRASENA.

ANSWER.—Before the colors get quite hard one or two drops of pure glycerine, dropped in the pan and mixed up with the point of a knife with the color, will be all that is necessary. If the Chinese white or water-color have become quite hard, then take it out of the pan or bottle, place in a glass muller, and beat it up quite fine and smooth with a few drops of glycerine and water, and replace in the pan or bottle. The glycerine does not injure the paints or render them greasy.

AN EBONIZING PROCESS.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: You published recently directions for coloring wood to give it the dead black appearance of ebony. Allow me to send your readers the following English recipe, which I have adopted with much success:

"First, wet your work all over with a solution of logwood and copperas (sulphate of iron) boiled together and laid on hot. Use a few cents' worth of logwood, and half as many cents' worth of copperas to the quart of water. When dry, wet all over again with a mixture of vinegar and steel filings; 2 oz. of steel filings dissolved in a half pint of vinegar. When dry, sandpaper down with fine paper until quite smooth. Then oil and fill in with powdered drop black mixed in the filler. Then proceed to body up, using a little drop black in your polish. Work to be ebonized should have a good level body of polish. Should your body become rough or unlevel, use a little powdered pumice-stone tied up in a piece of rag. Dust your work lightly over with it. When bodied up let your work stand for twelve hours, then body up again with white polish. If your job is to be a bright polish finish off with spirits. If dull, rub down with powdered pumice-stone and a felt rubber until sufficiently dull, then dust off with a piece of clean rag."

A PHOTOGRAPHIC COPYING PROCESS.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: What is the blue photographic process of copying tracings used by architects by which white lines are produced on dark blue ground?

S. P. A., Boston.

ANSWER.—The paper is first brushed over with a solution of ferricoxalate, ten grains to the ounce. It will remain good for years, but must be kept carefully in the dark. Expose it to the light under the drawing that is to be copied, and then brush it over with or immerse it in a solution of ferridcyanide of potassium (red prussiate of potash), by which the picture will be immediately developed, white lines upon a blue ground. The strength of the developing solution is immaterial. The blue color becomes intensified by subsequent washing with a solution of bisulphate of potash. The best sensitizing preparations are those in which ammonia as well as oxalic acid forms a part. Such ammonia-ferric oxalate may be prepared by mixing together oxalate of ammonia, 437 grains; oxalic acid, 386 grains; water, 6 ounces; heating the mixture to the boiling point and then stirring in as much hydrated peroxide of iron as it will dissolve. Peroxalate of iron alone is simply prepared by adding peroxide of iron to a hot solution of oxalic acid in water to saturation.

DIRECTIONS FOR LONGWY POTTERY DECORATION.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: Please oblige several of your subscribers by informing them what the Longwy ware decoration is, and how it is done? We understand no knowledge of painting is necessary to produce it. Is it done on china or earthenware? Are the colors in powder or tubes? How is the colored crackle produced?

ART CIRCLE, Buffalo, N. Y.

ANSWER.—It is true no knowledge of painting is necessary for this style of decoration, as it consists of filling in traced outlines with color. But a knowledge of painting would of course be valuable. Taste in the disposition of the designs and arrangement of the colors has much to do in producing an artistic result. The decoration is done with relief enamel colors, which are put up in powder in glass tubes. The colors may be used on either china or earthenware. The mode of working paintings in this style is quite simple. It is as follows: Sketch your outline on the china with lithographic crayon, or trace it on with black-lead transfer paper. With a steel pen go over the whole of your outline in tracing black. This black is made ready for use simply by mixing with sugared water. Apply your colors with a camel's-hair brush, without covering your outline, and as thick as you can. They are prepared in the following way: Put a small quantity on a slab, rub some mucilage into it with a palette knife, and bring it to the consistency of a thick cream. The color should not run—if it does, rub into it a very little of common paste—it

will cause it to keep its place better; let dry, and fire in a common china kiln. The ground in this style of painting is mostly made with *crackled white*; this white is put in just the same way as other colors, and is fired with them. When coming out of the kiln its appearance is that of ordinary white, but if a liquid color or ink is rubbed over, the crackled lines in the enamel will immediately appear.

TO RESTORE THE PURITY OF IVORY.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: Is there any way to restore old ivory to its original color without danger of cracking it?

E. P., New Orleans.

ANSWER.—Yes. Cover it with a glass and expose it to the rays of the sun.

TO GILD STEEL.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: You will much oblige me if you will give some simple directions for gilding steel.

ANTWERP BLUE, Troy, N. Y.

ANSWER.—Mr. Leland in his "Minor Arts" recommends the following: "Make a neutral solution of gold in aqua regia (nitro-muriatic acid), and pour into it a quantity of sulphuric ether, which will take up the gold and float upon the denser acid. The article is then to be washed with this auriferous ether, that is to say, it is to be painted on with a hair-pencil. The ether now flies off and the gold adheres."

COLOR HINTS FOR CHINA PAINTERS.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: May I trouble you to name a few good combinations of color for ceramic painting.

NOVICE, Albany, N. Y.

ANSWER.—Sky-blue always goes well with pale orange; dark blue with deep orange; turquoise with violet blue; pale yellow with lilac; carmine with water-green; purple with warm ochrous shades and yellow. Grays harmonize with any color.

CHANGEABLE CARNATIONS AND YELLOWS.

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: (1) What color would you recommend for a beginner as the safest general background for flowers? (2) Can you account for the change of color in my carnations and yellows from their appearance on the sample saucer, on which specimens of all the Lacroix tube colors are burned in. A friend of mine who uses the same kind of colors and buys them from the same store as I do, has no such difficulty.

TEACHER, Peoria, Ill.

ANSWER.—(1) Brown. (2) Perhaps your use a steel palette knife, which would account for your trouble. A horn or ivory knife is preferable.

"EN CAMAÏEU" AND "EN GRISAILLE."

Editor of *The Art Amateur*:

SIR: (1.) Is the term "en camaïeu" employed in reference to a painting executed in a single color only? (2.) What is "decoration 'en grisaille'?"

BOLTON, New York.

ANSWER.—(1.) Yes; but allowing the introduction of the different shades of the color to heighten the effect of the decoration. (2.) "En grisaille" means, in French, "in gray." The term refers to an old style of ceramic painting in which the different tints of gray were used in decoration to give the effect of relief.

SUPPLEMENT DESIGNS.

PLATE CV. is a Japanese design for embroidery—"Flight of Flamingoes."

PLATE CVI. is a design for a plaque—"La Torera"—to be painted as follows: Hair, black (raven black and browns). Face, ivory yellow, carnation No. 1 and 2, yellow ochre, browns. Hat, dark fur (raven black and yellow ochre), gray (neutral gray and raven black) in the middle, with a black pompon. Waist, silk (purple and blue), with gray and light rose (carmine A Nos. 1 and 3) embroideries. Belt, red (capucine red and browns). Petticoat, yellow ochre as general tint, with browns and silver yellow for the ornamental patterns. Stockings, gray (neutral gray and gray No. 2), with rose shoes (carmine Nos. 1 and 2), with light green bows (chrome green). Cloth, red (red brown and capucine red with browns). Sword, grayish blue (neutral gray and ultramarine).

PLATE CVII. is a design for a plaque—"A Highland Piper"—to be painted according to the following directions: Cap, any Scotch plaid. Coat, white of the china, with gray and yellow for mixing. Pipe, wood-brown, with ivory keys (very light yellow). Kilt and ribbons, Scotch plaids. Bag, reddish gray. Fur, black tails on a ground of yellowish hair (gray and yellow for mixing). Knees, flesh tints. Gaiters, white. Shoes, black. Make a ground all over the tile, in order to give the white of the waist a good effect.

PLATE CVIII. is a group of designs for embroidery—"Daisies," "Black-spotted Nemophila," and "Cyclamen." The daisy design is for a pin-cushion; make the flowers with cream-colored petals and bright yellow centres, the leaves and grass in different shades of green. The nemophila is to be worked in crewels, the flowers blue, with the beginning of the petal black, the stamens yellow with red anthers, the stalks and leaves green. The cyclamen flowers are pink.

PLATE CIX. is a set of six tiles for the right-hand of the fireplace illustrated in the June ART AMATEUR, in which instructions for the painting are given.